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NO EMBARGO

AL JAMA-AH CONDEMNS ISRAEL'S DEATH PENALTY BILL AS A DISCRIMINATORY ASSAULT ON PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, LIFE AND DIGNITY

The Al Jama-ah Political Party strongly condemns Israel's discriminatory "Penal Bill (Amendment – Death Penalty for Terrorists)," passed by the Knesset on the 30th of March 2026. The discriminatory death bill expands the use of capital punishment for "terrorism-related" offences, which overwhelmingly targets Palestinians and excludes Israeli citizens. This is a direct violation of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid.

According to international legal experts, the wording and structure of the legislation make clear that its practical application will primarily, if not exclusively, apply to Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. The legislation mandates execution by hanging, restricts access to legal counsel and family visits, limits external oversight, grants immunity to those carrying out executions, and accelerates implementation by requiring executions within 90 days, while severely limiting appeals and prohibiting commutation of sentences.

Within military courts operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the death penalty may be imposed even without a prosecutorial request, leaving minimal judicial discretion. The Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem has reported that military trials of Palestinians carry an approximately 96% conviction rate, frequently relying on confessions allegedly obtained under duress during interrogations. Israeli citizens and settlers remain excluded from this framework and continue to be tried in civilian courts, creating what human rights observers have described as a two-tier system of justice.

The passage of Israel's discriminatory death penalty bill represents a dangerous escalation that threatens fundamental human rights and undermines the global rules-based order. The enactment of punitive laws applied disproportionately to one national group risks entrenching institutionalised discrimination and contravenes international humanitarian and human rights law. A justice system that differentiates punishment based on identity cannot claim legitimacy under international law.

Al Jama-ah holds that this legislation represents a serious violation of international legal obligations, including: the right to life and equality before the law protected under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of the United Nations; protections

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afforded to occupied populations under the Fourth Geneva Convention; and the prohibition of racially discriminatory laws under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

These developments occur amid ongoing legal scrutiny before the International Court of Justice and investigations by the International Criminal Court concerning conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

As a nation whose democracy emerged from the defeat of Apartheid, South Africa carries a historic and constitutional obligation to oppose discriminatory legal systems wherever they arise. Al Jama-ah believes that the international community cannot remain silent while legislation institutionalises unequal justice based on nationality or identity.

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